



AN INFORMATIONAL RESOURCE FOR PROGRAMS, EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES THAT CREATE THE VIRGINIA BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

April / May 2004

DBA Provides New Multilingual Service

DBA recently contracted with LLE, a Virginia-based communications solutions company, in an effort to accommodate non-English speaking clientele should they require the assistance of an interpreter. In addition, clients will find newly translated documents on the DBA website in Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese.

“Our goal is to serve all Virginia businesses, including those who may have limited English proficiency and that have historically been underserved,” Governor Mark R. Warner said. “We’re always looking for new ways to make it easy for these businesses to have the tools they need in order to be successful.”

LLE provides a wide scope of interpretation and translation services to both government and private entities. The com-

pany engages virtually thousands of professional, certified linguists in more than 150 languages. DBA will be using the LLE-LINK, a language interpretation network which will connect non-English speaking callers and DBA representatives with appropriate interpreters.

“As we continue to reach out to all Virginia businesses, we anticipate receiving more requests for assistance from non-English speaking business owners,” DBA Multilingual Program Manager Dr. Maricel Quintana-Baker said.

Last year, Quintana-Baker was hired to ensure that all Virginia businesses are included in DBA’s programs and services.

DBA personnel, including Virginia Business Information Center (VBIC) service managers, have been trained in using this latest multilingual tool and are prepared to receive requests for information.

The Stakes Are High For Virginia In The Budget Debate

By Governor Mark R. Warner

As I write this column today, the Commonwealth of Virginia has entered uncharted territory. The General Assembly session was supposed to be 60 days and we have long surpassed that. The General Assembly has failed to pass a budget for the 2005-2006 biennium, which is an unprecedented event for our Commonwealth. But despite the rhetorical tone, individual legislators are increasingly indicating to me that there is a willingness to reach compromise. I want to report to you that I believe this problem will be solved, and I have great faith that we will enact a budget in Virginia that returns the state to a bright fiscal future.

It is my fervent hope that the General Assembly will reach agreement sooner rather than later. But the cost of inaction - or inadequate action - is so high that we must stay the course in Richmond and fight for a real, long-term solution.

Throughout the regular General Assembly session and since its conclusion, I have had countless meetings with legislators. I have been traveling throughout Virginia to share my concerns about the legislature’s failure to adopt a responsible budget, and to hear the concerns of Virginians.

In my travels, and in town hall meetings held by legislators, we have heard repeatedly from local city council members, supervisors, sheriffs, and other local leaders that the state’s failure to enact a responsible budget in a timely fashion has grave consequences for local governments. I say “responsible budget” because the current House budget proposal does not meet the needs in public safety, fund teacher pay raises, or help keep our local property taxes from rising. The House



budget does almost nothing to make our tax code more fair and keep the tax relief promises that were debated so vigorously before in Richmond.

Additionally, Virginians are turning out in overwhelming numbers to ask their legislators to invest in our shared future. Virginians understand how we got here.

Virginia struggled through a recession in the early 1990s without increasing taxes. In the late 1990s, Virginia promised tax relief to various groups, passing 50 different tax breaks totaling more than \$1.5 billion a year. Virginia was able to avoid revenue shortfalls through the decade because of the booming economy. But through legislation we enacted last year, Virginia now has a six-year projection of expected revenues and spending commitments. That projection clearly shows ongoing shortfalls each year through the end of the decade. My introduced budget does not quite fill the gap, as I believe we must keep the pressure on our government reforms to continue to achieve sizeable annual savings. But we must increase revenues to responsibly fund services our citizens expect, even with those annual savings.

The plan that I put forward before last Thanksgiving is fair, pays the bills, protects our AAA bond rating, and makes the necessary investments in key areas such as education. If passed by the General Assembly, it will provide \$1 billion of additional revenue,

CONT'D ON BACK

ASK VBIC

Home-based businesses are soaring in popularity. For many it is a cost effective way to start a business, and for some a viable long term arrangement. Frequently, those starting down the path towards a home-based business will contact VBIC asking how to get a business license or how to register their name. What’s common to many of these inquiries is what they fail to ask.

“Are there any restrictions on home-based businesses?” The most important first step in starting a home-based business is to check with the county or city zoning office to see if there are any restrictions on home-based businesses for a specific residence. For instance, if a home is in a subdivision, property owners may find covenants prohibiting home-based businesses. Checking before hand requires little time and can avoid unnecessary surprises later on.

Does my home owner’s policy cover my business activity and equipment? Another concern frequently overlooked by the new home-based business owner is insurance. In many cases, the policy needs to be modified to cover the business activity. Again, a quick phone call can avoid nasty surprises!

VIRGINIA BUSINESS INFORMATION CENTER

(804) 371-0438 OR (866) 248-8814 toll free
vbic@dba.virginia.gov

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DBA Hosts Matchmaking Events

Since before the release of the Commonwealth’s recent disparity study, DBA had begun scheduling its first of many matchmaking events throughout Virginia in an effort to link state procurement officials with small, women and minority-owned businesses (SWAM’s).

This event was recently hosted in Southside Virginia where procurement officers from the Virginia Department of Transportation, Virginia Commonwealth University and Virginia Department of Health were available to meet with SWAM business owners for very specific procurement purposes.

“I’m glad our state leadership feels this is an important issue,” VCU Director of Procurement and Payment Ed Gibbs said. “We should have been doing this for years.”

VCU has been an advocate for supplier diversity since the 80’s - setting aggressive recruitment goals.

“What makes our program different, I think, is that it’s not centered around one person,” Gibbs said. “Our entire procurement staff can tell you what our supplier diversity goals are. It lives and breathes here.”

Early this year, the state’s disparity report found that the Commonwealth awards less

contracts to women and minority business enterprises (WBE/MBE) in comparison to neighboring states - due partly to a relatively smaller pool of WBE’s and MBE’s in Virginia.

DBA will be planning several events throughout the year in an effort to rectify the findings of this study.

For women and minority owned businesses wishing to distinguish themselves among competing vendors, certification can be essential. For more information on WBE certification, contact DBA at 804.371.8200 or www.dba.state.va.us/mwbusinesses/wob.asp. For information on MBE certification, contact the Department of Minority Business Enterprise at 804.786.6585 or www.dmb.state.va.us.



Business Appreciation Week Set for May 16-22

DBA announces [Business Appreciation Week](#) -- a state-wide acknowledgement of the collective efforts of Virginia’s diverse business community. Business Appreciation Week will be celebrated May 16-22, 2004 with local and regional events including the Governor’s kick-off breakfast.

DBA is offering a variety of supporting resources to help local event coordinators make their Business Appreciation Week activities successful. For more information, please visit our website at www.dba.state.va.us/events/baw.asp or call us at 804.371.8200.

GOVERNOR WARNER CONT’D

while cutting taxes for 65% of Virginians. My plan lowers income taxes for most Virginians, closes some corporate loopholes, phases out the car tax, and reduces the food tax. To provide the resources to strengthen our state’s infrastructure, taxes would go up on cigarettes, the sales tax, and on the incomes of wealthy Virginians. It is important to remember that no new revenues would be needed if we still had the tax code of the mid-1990s.

Here in Virginia, we have a history of producing responsibly balanced budgets. We have been fortunate to avoid the fates of states like New York and Massachusetts that habitually rely on continuing resolutions. New York has failed for 20 consecutive years to pass a budget on time. Since the House and Senate have different visions of what must happen with the budget, I believe that both bodies must compromise. I have a plan that falls in between the two and urge the legislature to give it serious reconsideration.

Before closing, I want to emphasize the significance of this debate to the business community. It is of the utmost importance that Virginia remains a state that is an

attractive place for businesses to locate. New businesses will not invest and bring jobs to a state where they have questions about the quality of its future workforce. Part of being a business-friendly state is making the necessary investments in public education, healthcare, and public safety. A reasonable compromise on the budget should prove to both our current businesses and other groups looking to bring jobs to Virginia that we are indeed the place for them to be. We hope to pass a plan that does not place an unfair burden for new revenues on businesses.

I think legislators and Virginians share the goal of maintaining some of the best institutions of higher education in the nation, a strong K-12 system that creates economic opportunity throughout Virginia, safe communities, adequate health care that is provided with dignity, and other basic services of our state government. Virginians know we must reach compromise. The stakes in this debate, however, mandate that we cannot compromise our core principles of fiscal responsibility and fairness.

Stay in touch with my office and your legislators. This remains the right fight.

Conference on Small & High Tech Firms

A conference on [Manufacturing & Financing Small & High Tech Firms](#) is scheduled for April 22-23, 2004 at the Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center in Roanoke. For more information on this event, contact K.C. Das at 804.897.0454.

Small Business Fair

The Community College Workforce Alliance presents the [2nd Annual Small Business Resource Fair](#), scheduled for May 7, 2004 in their downtown Richmond facility. For more information on this event designed to connect central Virginia’s small business community with small business resources, contact Stu Neal at 804.542.4320.

CALENDAR

05.07.04

2nd Annual Small Business Resource Day

05.16.04 to 05.22.04

Business Appreciation Week
"Together We Make A Difference"

06.23.04

Virginia Economic Dev. Seminar:
Virginia's Business Development
Strategies For Small, Women &
Minority Owned Businesses, Part II

Visit www.dba.state.va.us for more details and other events.

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